

#### Richard Leigh to Perform

Concert to Benefit Keyser-Aday Theatre

Grammy Award winner Richard Leigh will return to the campus of Virginia Highlands Community College on April 17 to perform the hits that earned



him a place on the Nashville Songwriter's Hall of Fame.

Best known as the songwriter of "Don't it Make My Brown Eyes Blue," the Crystal Gayle hit that garnered him a 1978 Grammy Award for Best Country Song and a CMA Award for Song of the Year, Leigh graduated from VHCC in 1973. He earned an Associate of Arts Degree in Theatre Arts, working under the direction of William Van Keyser and Gary Aday. His upcoming campus concert supports a VHCC Educational Foundation fund-raising effort to establish the Keyser-Aday Theatre at VHCC.

"We are so excited to invite Richard back to our campus to reconnect with old friends and perform the songs that made him a big success in Nashville," said Vice President of Institutional Advancement David Matlock, who leads the VHCC Educational Foundation. "The proceeds from this concert will help us recognize the amazing contributions Van and Gary have made to our theater program since the early 1970s, while also allowing us to establish student scholarships and support a variety of arts programs on our campus."

Following his graduation from VHCC, Leigh earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Theatre Education from Virginia Commonwealth University. He moved to Nashville in 1974 and signed a publishing agreement with United Artists the following year.

Over the course of his career, he has written more than a dozen Top 20 hits, which have been recorded by such artists as Ronnie Millsap, the Dixie Chicks, Ray Charles, Anne Murray, Steve Wariner, Billy Dean, Reba McEntire, and Bailey and the Boys. He was named to the prestigious Nashville Songwriter's Hall of Fame in 1994.

Tickets for Leigh's April 17 concert are \$25 and are available now in Room 625 of the Learning Resources Center on the VHCC campus. For additional information, please call (276) 739-2456.



VHCC News is produced each month by Anne Dunham of the Office of Institutional Advancement. If you would like to suggest information for the newsletter, please send your ideas to adunham@vhcc.edu or contact her by phone at 276-739-2456. VHCC is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Institution

Virginia Highlands Community College www.vhcc.edu or call 276-739-2400 Para la ayuda en español, llama por favor



## Spring Break at the Coast

Students enrolled in Coastal Ecology spent Spring Break at Mississippi's Gulf Coast Research Laboratory studying a variety of sea creatures and sharpening their research skills.

The research center is used by hundreds of students each year, but VHCC is the only community college to visit the facility. Students this year were delighted to find the usual suspects - crabs, gators, pelicans, and oysters - as well as bonnethead sharks, a red-cockaded woodpecker, and a bald eagle nest.

Coastal Ecology is an honor's course that requires students to first complete basic biology courses and apply for acceptance into the coarse. The course is taught by Kevin Hamed, assistant professor of biology, and Joel Keebler, assistant professor of horticulture. For more details about the trip, read a MySpace blog posted by student Jillian Holcolmb, who served as teaching assistant, at <a href="http://www.myspace.com/book\_chick">http://www.myspace.com/book\_chick</a>.

(Top) Students enrolled in Coastal Ecology, a sophomore level class that transfers to 4-year institutions, spent Spring Break at Gulf Coast Research Facility in Mississippi studying under the direction of Associate Professors Joel Keebler and Kevin Hamed. (Above) Even seasoned scientists like Kevin Hamed (blue jacket) can still be surprised by some of the creatures that emerge from the sea.

# State Board Approves Two Campus Projects

The architectural design of Heartwood and a planned expansion of the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center moved a step forward on March 20 during a meeting of the State Board for Community Colleges.

The meeting was held at the Higher Education Center and marks the first time in more than a decade that the meeting has been held in Abingdon. The State Board meets each March in the town in which the chairman resides. Abingdon's Mark Graham currently serves in that capacity.

"I love the five-minute commute to the board meeting better than the five-hour commute [to Richmond] that I normally have to do every other month," Graham told the Bristol Herald Courier.

Heartwood, the Southwest Virginia Artisan Gateway project, was announced by then-Gov. Mark Warner during an October 2005 visit to VHCC and will be built on an eight-acre site of campus visible from heavily-traveled Interstate 81. In addition to studio and retail space for local artisans, the center will include a food services area and a conservatory feature. It also will become the new home of the Abingdon Visitor's Center.

The State Board earlier approved the concept of the artisan center and now has approved the design proposed by the architectural firm of Spectrum Design.



Mark Graham

The 6,200-square-foot addition to the Higher Education Center will provide three large classrooms, a lobby, restrooms and a new entrance. The original footprint of the building included the added space, but money was not available at that time. SBCC approval was needed because the Higher Education Center is located on the VHCC campus.



Members of the Division of Business, Humanities and Social Sciences recently planted a tree on campus as a gift to Dean Alma Rowland. The tree is a coral bark maple, a unique variety on the VHCC campus, and was planted in memory of Alma's mother, Angela Quintana Zamora, who passed away on her 89th birthday. Associate Professor of Economics David Collins chose the tree and arranged the ceremony, which included expert planting advice from Assistant Professor of Horticulture Joel Keebler. The tree is just outside the Learning Resources Center and already is being studied by students of Woody Landscape Plants, a horticulture course taught by Adjunct Instructor Kate Watson.

## Paramedic-to-RN Classes Set to Begin

Classes are set to begin in May for the newly established part-time evening/weekend Paramedic-to-RN program offered through the Virginia Appalachian Tricollege Nursing Program (VATNP).

All classes will be offered at night and through distance education courses at VATNP's three member colleges - Virginia Highlands Community College, Southwest Virginia Community College, and Mountain Empire Community College. Program graduates will be awarded an Associate of Applied Science Degree in Nursing and will be eligible to take the national licensure exam for registered nurses.

"We're very excited about this program because it will provide the flexibility that busy health care providers need to enhance their skills and training," said VATNP Director Kathy Mitchell. "Certified paramedics who cannot meet the rigorous scheduling and course load demands of our traditional day program now have the option of an extended program that includes evening classes, online courses, and evening and weekend lab/clinical training."

The program was developed in response to the region's certified paramedics and was made possible by a grant from the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification and Community Revitalization Commission.

For additional information about the program, including prerequisites, please contact the VHCC Admissions Office.



### FROM THE ARCHIVES



Parlez vous francais? Students enrolled in 1970 learned to speak French - and a variety of other languages - in the snazzy, state-of-the-art Language Lab. Here Mrs. Bairid, the French instructor, listens in as students attempt to sound more like Parisians than Southwest Virginia natives.



### **SkillsUSA**

Students from Washington County's Neff Center and the Smyth County Career & Technical Center showcased their electrical skills during a recent SkillsUSA competition on the VHCC campus.

In the residential wiring competition, Zack Williams of Smyth County won first place, followed by the Neff Center's Travis Street and Tyler Miller, who finished in second and third places, respectively.

Cody Kessee and Zack Blevins, both of Smyth County, finished first and second in the Industrial Motor Control competition, followed by Ryan Clark of the Neff Center in third place.

SkillsUSA is a national nonprofit organization that serves students who are preparing for careers in trade, technical and skilled service occupations.

## Students Participate in CESSE Survey

Randomly selected classes at Virginia Highlands Community Colleg and other community colleges throughout the state and nation are being asked to share their views during March and April by completing the Community College Student Report.

Questions focus on how and where students spend their time, the nature and quality of their interactions with faculty members and peers, and what they have gained from your classes and other aspects of their college experience. Responses to the survey are confidential and results are used to help VHCC examine its educational practices and identify ways to improve programs and services for students.

The Community College Survey of Student Engagement (CCSSE) is supported by grants from The Pew Charitable Trusts, the Lumina Foundation for Education, and the MetLife Foundation.

Additional information about the Community College Survey of Student Engagement is available online at <a href="https://www.ccsse.org">www.ccsse.org</a>.

## Insurance Provides Assistance Program

Looking for short-term assistance in handling a personal, family or work-related issue? A free benefit is included in the behavioral health benefits for all employees enrolled in the state's health insurance plans. A confidential assessment and up to four free counseling visits (with local counselors) are available to the employee and members of the employee's household who are eligible for health insurance coverage. Reasons for accessing this benefit may include conflicts within the family or workplace; personal and emotional concerns; alcohol and substance abuse; financial and legal problems; elder and child care issues; and career concerns and other challenges.

Accessing the care is easy. Call the benefit provider, ValueOptions, at 866-725-0602. All services are completely confidential. If more than four sessions are needed, ValueOptions also will assist you with accessing the Behavioral Health insurance benefits with the designated co-pays applicable to those services. The ValueOptions web site is also a good source of specific and general information. You may access the web site link on the FYI-Health Insurance Section of the Human Resources web page. Always call the toll-free number (listed on your health insurance card) for preauthorization before accessing the Employee Assistance or Behavioral Health benefits or scheduling appointments with a provider. Contact the HR Office if you have any questions.